

To: President of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
President of the National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics
President of the Association State Supervisors of Mathematics

From: Concerned Mathematics Educators

Date: January 12, 2022

Re: The critical need for updates 9-12 mathematics standards

Throughout the history of your organizations, you have provided bold leadership in support of teachers and leaders in mathematics education. Your leadership has helped ensure higher quality and more equitable mathematical learning experiences for all students. Over the years, communications from NCTM, NCSM and ASSM, as exemplified most recently by your collaboration on Continuing the Journey, has been regarded by math educators all across the country as relevant and of the utmost importance. When you speak, people listen. It is for these reasons that we implore you to continue to help us move forward as a math community by filling a giant gap regarding high school mathematics.

Over the past ten years, mathematics educators have recognized that the K-8 Common Core State Standards, while not perfect and certainly in need of tweaking, *are* internationally benchmarked, coherently based on research-affirmed learning progressions, fewer and deeper by design, and, most importantly, achievable. In stark contrast, the high school standards are cluttered, outdated, and, because of their scope, unteachable and unachievable for many. They are not based on coherent progressions, they do not accommodate the impact of widely available technology (including computer algebra systems), nor do they articulate equally rigorous differentiated pathways that reflect the broad range of post-secondary mathematical needs. By clinging to increasingly obsolete content, they leave little room for statistics and modeling, and most problematically, they reinforce serious inequities and limit opportunities.

Since the publication of the CCSSM, high school teachers have diligently worked to develop local curriculum aligned to the standards with little success in the face of textbooks and assessments that limit change. As you all recognize, our current high school standards often run counter to your own vision statements, as too often, they do not affect the lives of our students, improve our world, nor help motivate students to learn mathematics. Every year, more than 15 million high school students are required to learn and master a set of skills that are not helping them become stronger problem solvers and effective reasoners in the 21st Century.

We believe that the problems are clear and the needs are great. **It is imperative that a new level of organizational collaboration be established to develop a new set of standards for high school math.** After the political debacle surrounding the corporate and philanthropic community dominance over the Common Core, we believe that critical curricular guidance must return to the profession and to those most responsible for its implementation.

We believe that we - the mathematics education community - should take the lead. In fact, we fear that if NCTM, NCSM and ASSM do not take a strong role, it is only a matter of time before another organization or private enterprise tries to fill the leadership void with another set of standards that do not prioritize student's best interests.

Thank you for your serious consideration of this urgent issue. We are ready and eager to talk with you about moving these ideas forward in a collaborative, high-quality and impactful manner.

Sincerely,

Kevin Wiland, Park Ridge, IL
Steve Leinwand, American Institutes for Research

Jo Boaler, Stanford University
Gail Burrell, Michigan State University
Dan Meyer, Desmos
Cathy Seeley, formerly with The University of Texas Dana Center
John Staley, Baltimore County Public Schools
Michael Steele, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee
Francis Su, Harvey Mudd College
Jose Torres, Illinois Math and Science Academy, President Emeritus
Gwen Zimmermann, Adlai Stevenson High School